

Zachary Taylor slept here; artifacts remain

Maj. Zachary Taylor (1784-1850) was 34 years old when he commanded Northeastern Wisconsin's military installation at Fort Howard from 1818-1820.

Taylor eventually became a military hero and 12th president of the United States (1849-1850).

When he left Green Bay in 1820, it was not a comfortable relocation.

"Zachary Taylor and his wife brought with them...to this unsettled life, refinements in household goods hitherto unknown: beautiful mahogany furniture, and fine old china, a large part of which, however, they were obligated to dispose of to Green Bay residents before embarking for Major Taylor's next command at Prairie du Chien," writes Deborah Martin, in *History of Brown County*.

"The only mode of travel being by bateau or canoe, it was manifestly impossible to carry a mammoth sideboard and heavy tables through the rapids of the Fox River and the shallows of the Wisconsin, so this fine personal property was left to furnish and delight a Green Bay home."

A few artifacts from Taylor's stay here have remained in the area and can be seen locally.

A piece called "The Martin Desk"



Throughout this year of Wisconsin's Sesquicentennial celebration, the Press-Gazette will publish a series of stories on local history. This feature, prepared with the assistance of the Brown County Historical Society, will appear on Mondays.



was originally a sideboard of the Taylor family.

It was damaged by fire and could not be used. In 1886, Deborah Martin had a

desk made, from the wood which was not damaged, by Mr. Charles Newell, an expert cabinet maker. The piece retains the original English hardware.

On June 27, 1936, the piece was purchased from the Martin estate by the Green Bay De Pere Antiquarian Society.

A room was dedicated to Martin at Fort Howard Hospital where it was on display. In 1964, the Fort Howard Board of Regents had it placed at Hazelwood. It is located in the sitting room.

Another Zachary Taylor piece is a six drop-leaf cherrywood table that was purchased by the Antiquarians from character member Mrs. W.P. Wagner in April, 1924. It originally was located in the Fort Howard hospital and currently is on permanent loan display in the Officer's Quarters at Heritage Hill State Historical Park.

The desk and table, along with other local historical artifacts that are owned by the Green Bay-De Pere Antiquarian Society is part of the Antiquarian Sesquicentennial Exhibit at Neville Public Museum starting January 31, 1998.

(Submitted by Carol Jones, Brown County Historical Society, Green Bay De Pere Antiquarian Society)



Photo courtesy of Green Bay De Pere Antiquarian Society

From our past: The late Dorothy Straubel Wittig was photographed in 1970 at Hazelwood. In the background is the desk that includes parts of a sideboard owned by Zachary Taylor. She is seated in a rocker originally owned by Mrs. Morgan L. Martin.